

lowering its surface. These landforms often reflect the hardness of the underlying rock. Harder rocks resist erosion and over time will stand above the surrounding land. One example of this landform is a **plateau**. A plateau is an elevated flatland that rises sharply above nearby land on at least one side. A plain—a nearly flat area—is often the final stage of a landscape wearing smooth.

A third kind of landform is formed by sediment deposited by ice, water, or wind. A sand dune in a desert is an example of this kind of landform. Another example is a floodplain. A floodplain is a landform of level ground built by sediment deposited by a river or stream.

The terrain in most regions is a jigsaw puzzle of many landforms. For example, a mountain range is formed by tectonic activity. Erosion may then form deep valleys between the mountains. The sediment eroded from the mountains may then be deposited at the mountains' bases. The result of this process can be an **alluvial fan**. This is a fan-shaped deposit of mud and gravel often found along the bases of mountains. Still later a stream may erode the sediments in the alluvial fan, carrying them all the way to a river mouth. There the sediment may move out into the ocean and sink, or the sediment may accumulate, building a **delta**. Eventually this sediment from the distant mountains could travel still farther. It might finally be deposited in an oceanic trench.

The location, shape, and size of landforms have influenced human settlement and transportation throughout history. For example, people tend to settle in flat areas where they can farm. People use rivers for water supplies and transportation. Many railroads and highways have been built along river valleys as well. People have also changed Earth's surface to suit their needs. Large machines can smooth ground for home construction, and explosives clear the way for roads. Governments build dams across rivers, turning valleys into lakes.

READING CHECK: *Physical Systems* What are two kinds of landforms created by deposits of sediment?

Section 1

Review

Define

core, mantle, magma, plate tectonics, continental drift, rift valleys, abyssal plains, continental shelves, trench, folds, faults, weathering, sediment, erosion, glaciers, plateau, alluvial fan, delta

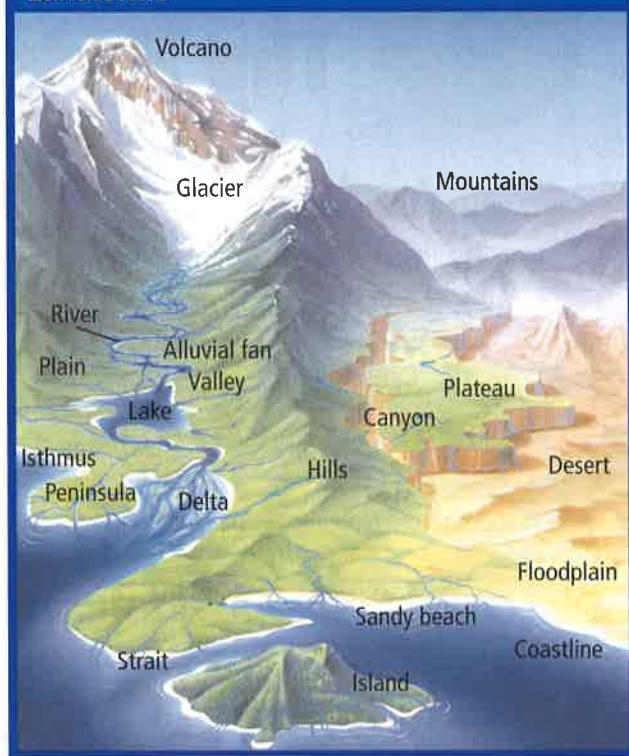
Reading for the Main Idea

- Physical Systems** What are some processes that shape landforms?
- Physical Systems** What are the three kinds of landforms?

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Information** How might a plateau show the effects of both tectonic process and erosion?
- Drawing Inferences and Conclusions** Why do you think farming and raising livestock may lead to rapid erosion?

Landforms



INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

Many of the landforms shown here can be found together in various regions of Earth. Which landforms can you identify where you live?

go.hrw.com Homework Practice Online
Keyword: SW3 HP4

Organizing What You Know

- Copy the table below. Use it to list the three types of tectonic plate boundaries, the landforms that result from each type, and an example of each type.

Type of plate boundary	Resulting landforms	Example